

Remarks/Arguments

The specification has been amended, claims 11 and 22 – 30 have been canceled, claims 31 - 34 have been added, and formal drawings have been submitted, all as will be described below.

Referring to paragraph 1 of the Office Action, the specification has been amended to address these matters.

Referring to paragraph 3 of the Office Action, claims 11 and 22 – 30 have been canceled and other relevant claims have been amended to address these matters.

Referring to paragraph 5 of the Office Action, the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over EPA 0 348 349 (Smith et al.) is respectfully traversed.

As an initial matter, the Examiner's reliance on the Jepson styling of the claims is fundamentally misplaced. Leaving aside for the moment that a Jepson style claim is no longer being presented, the Examiner, relies on the Jepson style structure for the proposition that having adhesive layers in direct contact with the covering layers is known to the prior art. But so much was described in paragraph [009] of the specification, to wit;

"Multi-layer identity cards are manufactured by firstly producing either the integral card core layer printed on both sides or producing the card core layers printed on one. Then the adhesive coated covering layers are produced. Following this the card layers produced are brought into register and in this state placed in a laminating press, wherein they are joined together under pressure and while heated."

What the examiner ignores is that the foregoing process is not the process of Smith et al. and, significantly, is what gives rise to the very serious problem that applicants' invention solves. As excerpted from the specification:

"[I]n the case of fairly high temperatures of lamination (> 120 degrees C) in the case of the lamination of identity cards with a card core printed on either side there is an undesired

deformation or displacement of the printed card core in relation to the covering layers arranged on either side of it, which are in direct contact with the press platens acting on them during lamination. The printed card core and the covering layers are then no longer in register with each other and the outline of the card is no longer in accordance with requirements.The reason for the displacement is taken to be that while the covering layers rest without any possibility of slip against the lamination platens on either side of the card structure to be laminated, above a certain lamination temperature the adhesive coating on the covering layers will form a sort of lubricating film between the printed card core and the covering layer, on or between which the printed card core moves out of position in relation to the covering layers. Then the formation of a lubricating film is even more encouraged owing to presence of the printing ink film."

Applicant solves this problem by providing each thermoplastic adhesive coating with at least one friction-increasing additive. Smith et al. do not even address the problem, and suggest nothing to solve it. In particular there are two distinctly different ways to produce a multi-layer card. According to the invention, a thermoplastic polymer adhesive is used whereupon the lamination process takes place simply by the application of heat and pressure. EP '349 mentions this possibility only in the introductory part of the description whereas the method of EP '349 describes a different way to produce multi-layer cards, namely by using polymerizable monomers which are polymerized during the production process by the action of ionizing or photopolymerizing radiation. The use of a silica filler in example 1 is only mentioned in connection with this second way to produce the multi-layer card. However, silica is only used as a filler and cannot meet the requirement of increasing the friction between the covering layer and the printed card core since the data-carrying sheet as well as the protective plastic film bear a gelatin layer.

The invention on the one hand and EP '349 on the other hand try to solve very different technical problems. Especially preventing displacement of the printed card core in

relation to the covering layer is not the problem according to EP '349 because of the different production process. This problem mainly arises when using a thermoplastic polymer adhesive when the lamination process takes place at rather high temperatures (> 120°C). This problem is solved according to the invention. Moreover, this process according to the invention using a thermoplastic polymer adhesive has advantages regarding simplicity of the process in comparison to the process described in EP '349 as already pointed out earlier especially because no additional photo polymerizing radiation, no additional free radical initiators and no additional gelatin layers are needed. Moreover, it is not necessary for the protective layer to be transparent because no radiation is needed.

Applicant has added claims 33 and 34 to specify a lamination temperature greater than 120 degrees centigrade, which more particularly differentiates the invention from any superficial similarity with Smith et al.

Applicant believes that all the claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully solicits a Notice of Allowance.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge payment of any fees required associated with this communication or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-0337. If an extension of time is required, please consider this a petition therefor and charge any additional fees which may be required to Deposit Account No. 50-0337. A duplicate copy of this paper is enclosed.

Dated: March 16, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

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Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheets of drawings replaces the original sheets of drawings in the application. In the replacement sheets, formal drawings of Figs. 1 - 8 are provided.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet